

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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-----290615Z 018863 /22

R 281300Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 802
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
COMIDEASTFOR
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 1222

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SU, YS, MU
SUBJECT: RED SEA SECURITY

BEGIN SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO LOCAL SUDANESE AMBASSADOR,
4 POWER MEETING HELD IN TAIZ TOOK LARGE NUMBER OF FAR-
REACHING DECISIONS WHICH NOT MENTIONED IN BLAND COMMUNIQUE.
SECRETET DECISIONS, IF IMPLEMENTED, COULD REVISE DRAMAT-
ICALLY POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS AND EVEN POLITICAL MAP AT
LOWER END OF RED SEA AND HORN OF AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

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1. LOCAL YEMENI GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER "ALTHAWRAH"
PUBLISHED ON MARCH 24, PRESS COMMUNIQUE ON SUMMIT
CONFERENCE HELD IN TAIZ MARCH 22 BETWEEN PDRY
PRESIDENT SALIM RUBAY'I ALI, YAR PRESIDENT IBRAHIM
AL-HAMDI, SOMALI PRESIDENT SAID BARRE AND SUDANESE
PRESIDENT JAFFAR NIMEIRI.

2. COMMUNIQUE REVEALS LITTLE. IT SAID THAT FOUR MEN ESTABLISHED "COOPERATION... BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THEIR RESOURCES" AND AGREED TO "COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS WITH AFFLUENT ARAB COUNTRIES". CONFEREES ALSO "DEALT IN THE RED SEA AND THE NECESSITY OF KEEPING IT AN AREA OF PEACE AND HARMONY". THEY "CALLED UPON FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO GIVE THE PEOPLE OF SOMALI COAST THEIR LAWFUL RIGHT TO EXERCISE BALLOT ON PATRIOTIC AND DEMOCRATIC BASIS AND NOT ON TRIBAL BASIS". THE PRESIDENTS STRESSED "THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION IN FACING THE AGGRESSIVE POLICY OF ISRAEL AND OF ZIONIST FORCES" AND FINALLY THE FOUR STATES PROMISED TO MAKE EFFORTS TO CONVENE AN "ENLARGED CONFERENCE TO INCLUDE ALL RED SEA COUNTRIES".

3. ACCORDING TO SUDANESE AMBASSADOR AHMADI, IN MARCH 27 TALK WITH AMBASSADOR AND DCM, AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FOUR PRESIDENTS WAS ACTUALLY MUCH MORE SPECIFIC AND FAR-REACHING THAN COMMUNIQUE SUGGESTED.

4. FIRST, CONFERENCE AGREED TO DRAW UP LIST OF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. MAURITANIA (YES, MAURITANIA) WOULD BE INVITED JOIN RED SEA FOUR IN PRESENTING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO THE AFFLUENT ARAB COUNTRIES. AHMADI SAID INCLUSION OF MAURITANIA SIMPLY EMPHASIZES THAT, LIKE SOMALIA, YAR, PDRY AND SUDAN THERE ARE ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERS WHO ARE WITHIN THE GROUP OF 25 CALLED
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"RELATIVELY LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" (RLDS'S) BY UN. ITS' POLITE WAY OF SAYING THE POOREST OF THE POOR IN THE WORLD AND UNDERSCORING IT MAY MAKE RICH SAUDIS MORE GENEROUS. (AHMADI READ INCREDULITY ON OUR FACES AND SAID THAT IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT SAUDIS ARE GOING TO PAY SOME BIG BILLS FOR RED SEA STATES AT LEAST.)

5. SECOND, THE CONFEREES ALSO AGREED THAT DJIBOUTI SHOULD BECOME INDEPENDENT AND JOIN THE ARAB LEAGUE. AHMADI DESCRIBED SIAD BARRE'S AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT AS SPECIFIC AND COMPLETE. AHMADI NOTED THIS "BREAK-THROUGH" WAS QUALIFIED BY THE WILLINGNESS OF THE OTHER THREE PARTICIPANTS TO CONSIDER CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF INDEPENDENCE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY WITHIN 5 YEARS TIME OF SOME KIND OF ORGANIC LINK BETWEEN SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI. ACCORDING TO AHMADI, THE PDRY PRESIDENT DID NOT RAISE ANY OBJECTION TO THIS FORMULA EVEN THOUGH IT CLEARLY ONE DEVISED AT

THE EXPENSE OF ETHIOPIA.

6. SEPTELDISCUSSES CHANGING SOMALI ATTITUDES TOWARD
TAIZ CONFERENCE BECAUSE OF DJIBOUTI ISSUE.

7. PDRY WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, AGREE TO ANY FORMULATION
ON ERITREA. PDRY (WHICH AHMADI SAYS HAS HALTED ALL OF
AID TO THE ELF) WAS UNBUDGING IN CONNECTION WITH
STATEMENTS OR PLANS ABOUT SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN SELF-
DETERMINATION OR EFFORTS TO STEP UP FIGHTING AGAINST
ETHIOPIANS. AHMADI SEES THIS AS REFLECTING ADEN DESIRE
NOT TO ACQUIESCE IN MUTILATION OR AMPUTATION OF STATE
WHICH IS FRIENDLY AND PROGRESSIVE EVEN THOUGH NOT ARAB.
THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM AGREEING TO EXPANSION OF THIS
SAME STATE INTO DJIBOUTI AT ARAB EXPENSE. SOUTH YEMEN
WAS JOINED BY YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC (ALTHOUGH FOR VERY
DIFFERENT REASONS) IN WARNING SUDANESE ABOUT GOING TOO
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FAR, TO FAST, WITH SUPPORT FOR SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS
IN ERITREA. (SEPTEL DISCUSSES AHMADI'S VIEWS ON HOW
MUCH SHOULD BE DONE TO HELP ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE. WE
THINK YAR VIEWS ARE PROBABLY THE SAME.WE MIGHT NOTE,
INCIDENTALLY OUR BELIEF THAT IN RESPECT TO ERITREA AHMADI
DIDN'T TELL US EVERYTHING.WE ASSUME THAT DESPITE PDRY
DEMURRER, THERE WAS SOME KIND OF AGREEMENT AMONG OTHERS
ON AID TO ERITREANS AND OTHER ANTI-DIRG ELEMENTSM)

8. THIRD, THE CONFEREES ALSO AGREED THAT NORTH AND
SOUTH YEMEN WOULD DRAW UP LISTS OF MILITARY NEEDS TO
SECURE THE BAB AL MANDEB AGAINST ISRAEL AND ZIONIST
FORCES. THIS LIST WOULD BE PRESENTED BY THE CONFEREES
TO AFFLUENT ARAB COUNTRIES (" THE SAUDIS," SAID
AHMADI) IN THE NEAR FUTURE.WE ASKED IF SAUDIS WOULD
FINANCE SOVIET WEAPONS FOR PDRY. "NO" SAID AHMADI.

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9. FOURTH, CONFEREES AGREED TO ENLARGE CONFERENCE ON RED SEA IN NEAR FUTURE TO INCLUDE ALL OF LITTORAL STATES "EXCEPT ISRAEL". CONFEREES ALSO AGREED THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE FOUR STATES, WHO WERE TO BE IN TOUCH FREQUENTLY TO PRESS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE'S DECISIONS, WOULD SET UP RED SEA CONFERENCE IN WAY TO APPEAR TO MAKE PLACE FOR ETHIOPIA. IN FACT, AHMADI ACHNOWLEDGED SMILINGLY, ETHIOPIA WILL NOT BE SOUGHT OR ALLOWED TO ATTEND AS A DELIVERATE SECRET

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MATTER OF ARAB POLICY UNTIL SUCH TIME AS REGIME CHANGES.AT THAT SIMTE, ETHIOPIA COULD BE WELCOME.

10. COMMENT: IF THIS IS TRUE, SAUDIS HAVE SCORED -- WITH LOTS OF HELP FROM NIMEIRI -- COUP WHICH IS ON PAR WITH THEIR DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTIONS IN LEBANON, MAGHRIB, OPEC. THEY HAVE TOPPED THE SOVIETS DEAD IN MAJOR EFFORT TO LAUNCH ALLIANCE BETWEEN HORN OF AFRICA PROGRESSIVES. THIS DIPLOMATIC EFFORT WAS LED BY NO LESS THAN CASTRO, AND BACKED -- ACCORDING TO AHMADI-- BY LIBYANMONEY.

11.SAUDIS (OR MAYBE WE SHOULD SAY ARAB MODERATES, TO INCLUDE SUDANESE AND

EGYPTIAN ROLES) HAVE INSTEAD LAUNCHED ALLIANCE OF THEIR OWN IN LOWER END OF RED SEA. THEY HAVE GIVEN MULTILATERAL FORM TO BILATERAL EFFORTS WHICH HAVE BEEN PURSUED BY SAUDIS AND OTHERS SEPARATELY WITH AREA STATES. DESPITE DISPARATE CHARACTERS OF FOUR STATES, CONFEREES WERE ABLE TO ACHIEVE REMARKABLE AMOUNT OF AGREEMENT ON WHAT TO DO IN LOWER END OF RED SEA.

12. PROGRAM ENCOMPASSES POLITICAL EVOLUTION IN DJIBOUTI (AND MAYBE ERITREA TOO, NOTWITHSTANDING PDRY). RESULT COULD BE TWO NEW STATES ON MAP OF RED SEA LITTORAL, STATES WHICH HAVE ACCEPTANCE AND EVEN KIND OF GUARANTEE FROM NEIGHBORS. PROGRAM HAS MILITARY AID COMPONENT, WITH SAUDIS ABVIOUSLY AIMING AT BEGINNING END OF PDRY DEPENDENCE ON SOVIETS FOR ARMS. THERE IS INTERRELATED ECONOMIC AID PACKAGE, DESIGNED TO LINK HORN OF AFRICA STATES TOGETHER AS WELL AS MOVE THEIR INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT FORWARD IN CHANNELS WHICH NOT NECESSARILY SOCIALIST. THERE IS PLAN FOR EXPANDED RED SEA CONFERENCE WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO POSE ARAB AS OPPOSED TO SOVIET CHOICES TO SECRET

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PDRY AND SOMALIA.

13. SOVIETS HAVE NOT ONLY SUFFERED MAJOR SETBACK, BUT ALSO WATCHED IT OCCUR IN PAINFULLY CONSPICUOUS MANNER, WITH THEIR FRIENDS CONSPIRING WITH THEIR ENEMIES. IT MAY NOT BE TOO MUCH TO SPECULATE THAT THEIR FAILURE TO CONSOLIDATE POSITION IN HORN WHICH COMPARABLE TO THEIR POSITION IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE IS SERIOUS STRATEGIC SETBACK FOR THEM IN AFRICA.

14. IF SO, IT APPEARS TO BE DUE TO PECULIAR FORM OF IDEOLOGICAL STUPIDITY ON PART OF SOVIETS. IN GO'S MOSCOW OPTED FOR RADICAL STATES OF NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN AND IN PROCESS DENIED THEMSELVES ANY HOPE OF ACCESS TO ARABIAN PENINSULAR STATES. NOW THEY ARE GOING FOR RADICAL ETHIOPIA, AND IN PROCESS MAY BE LOSING EXCELLENT POSITION IN SOMALIA.

15. IRONIC ASIDE ON THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS WAS PROVIDED BY LOCAL COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY AND NUMBER TWO MAN AT LARGE SOVIET EMBASSY IN SANA. AT DINNER GIVEN BY RUSSIANS FOR AMERICANS TO FETE DETENTE (SEPTEL ON THIS, TOO) SOVIET PROPOSED TO DCM RATHER MOROSELY THAT SOVIET UNION WOULD BE GLAD TURN OVER PDRY TO US IN EXCHANGE FOR SAUDI ARABIA. DCM SAID

NO, BUT SAID USSR SEEMED BE WILLING TRADE ETHIOPIA
FOR PDRY AND SOMALIA. SOVIET BECAME MORE MOROSE.

16. WE ATTRIBUTE SOVIET MOVES IN ETHIOPIA IN PART
AT LEAST TO IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN COLD-
BLOODED RALPOLITIK FOR WHICH THEY SUPPOSEDLY SO
FAMOUS. WE FEEL FURTHER THAT DYNAMICS OF REGION IN
HANDS OF SKILLFUL MODERATES ARE LIKELY BE ABLE TO
EXPLOIT WEAKNESSES OF SOVIET PROSITION VERY WELL.

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17. IN ANY CASE, SOVIETS ARE MAD AND FRUSTRATED.
SOVIET AMBASSADOR WENT TO TAIZ DURING CONFERENCE AND
DID HIS BEST CONTACT EVERYONE. WE HAVE TWO GOOD
SOURCES WHO REPORT THAT AMBASSADOR TOLD ASNAJ (AND
MAYBE HAMDI): "I WARN YOU NOT TO DO ANYTHING THAT
WILL AFFECT THE POSITIONOF SOVIET UNION IN THIS AREA
ADVERSELY." ACCORDING TO ONE OF OUR SOURCES, THIS
MINATORY EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE WHEN HAMDI, IN RAGE AT
FIRST NEWS THAT SIAD BARRE HAD CANCELLED TRIP TO TAIZ,
AND SUSPECTING SOVIET PRESSURE, CALLED SOVIET
AMBASSADOR TO TAIZ FOR EXPLANATION. WE WILL HAVE TO
DEAL WITH POSSIBILITY OF YEMENI-SOVIET STRAINS IN
SEPARATE CABLE, AS WE DON'T HAVE DETAILS YET FROM
YEMENIS, BUT WE MENTION IT HERE AS ANOTHER POSSIBLE
AND HIGHLY FAVORABLE CONSEQUENCE OF TAZ CONFERENCE.

18. ONE POINT WHICH TROUBLES US IS THAT MUCH OF
CEMENT OF THIS NEW ALLIANCE -- IF THAT'S WHAT IT IS
-- DEPENDS ON SOVIETS CONTINUING THEIR EFFORTS IN
ETHIOPIA AND, IN FACT, DEPENDS ON LOSS OF MUCH
ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY TO SOMALIS AND OTHERS. IN LONG
TERM THIS MAY PROVE TO BE AS GREAT LIABILITY AS
"ALLIANCE" APPEARS TO BE ASSET IN SHORT RUN.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TOOK LARGE NUMBER OF
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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